



The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.  
Prime Minister of Canada  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

March 2, 2022

Dear Prime Minister,

Northerners have watched with horror as the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine unfolds. Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut stand with western allies to condemn this unjustified violation of international law. We stand by the strong sanctions Canada has imposed on Russia.

Russia's drive to pursue its goals at the expense of the Ukrainian people is a threat to global security, including our Arctic cooperation. Peace and cooperation among circumpolar countries are essential for healthy and vibrant Arctic communities, and something valued by Canada's territories. Northern Premiers view Russia's recent aggression as a threat to the health of Arctic communities and the peace and cooperation values that guide Arctic affairs. We are growing increasingly concerned about Arctic defence and security.

In recent history, Russia has embarked on an ambitious program to strengthen its presence in the Arctic, including construction of new ports and infrastructure, and the expansion of its icebreaker fleet and military presence. As Russia's global investments and interests grow, we fear that Russia's aggression will inevitably present itself into Arctic affairs.

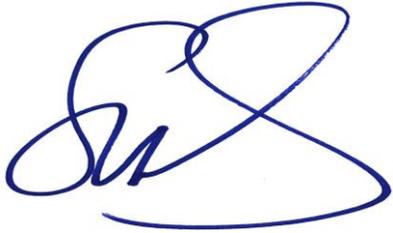
We need to acknowledge that Russia's invasion of Ukraine will affect the Arctic Council and its working groups. Such an egregious violation of international law calls into question the possibility of cooperation among Council members, especially since Russia is the Chair until May 2023

As key partners in Canada's Arctic Council network, Northern Premiers call on the Government of Canada to recognize that cooperation at the Arctic Council is being jeopardized given current realities. Russia's aggression in Ukraine demonstrates its ambition to secure its own power at the expense of others.

Climate change and the opening of Arctic waters have encouraged countries from around the globe to seek involvement in the Arctic. In the face of this increased international interest in our region, our interests and values remain resolute. For Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut these include promoting reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, ensuring Northerners are involved in decision-making about the North, addressing the impacts of climate change and advancing economic and social development while protecting the environment. We will do what it takes to foster partnerships that support our interests, and ask Canada to commit to bolstering security in the Arctic. The path to stronger security includes investments in critical infrastructure in transportation, energy, and telecommunications that support healthy vibrant growth in our communities. It also means that the territorial governments are kept apprised of relevant information coming from the North Warning System, which represents threats to our region.

Northerners stand with Ukrainians around the world, and the territorial governments support the federal government's sanctions on Russia. We have been seeking ways we can assist as individual governments, and will continue to look for ways to help those affected by this crisis. It is important that we confirm a call between yourself and the three northern premiers in the near future to discuss arctic sovereignty and arctic security.

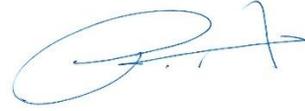
Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Sandy Silver  
Premier  
Yukon

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Caroline Cochrane" in a cursive script.

Caroline Cochrane  
Premier  
Northwest Territories

A handwritten signature in blue ink, featuring a large, circular loop followed by a horizontal line and a vertical stroke.

P.J. Akeeagok  
Premier  
Nunavut

Cc:

Deputy Prime Minister Freeland

Minister Joly

Minister Vandal

Minister LeBlanc

Minister Anand